

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:
 - a cell phone;
 - an answering machine integrated with the cell phone; and
 - a nonvolatile memory region to store an audio signal of an incoming call answered by the answering machine.
2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a speaker to provide screening of the incoming call.
3. The system of claim 1, further comprising an audio decompressor to decompress an audio signal of a first incoming call using a first audio decompression algorithm while the first incoming call is being received, and to decompress an audio signal of a second incoming call using a second audio decompression algorithm after the second incoming call has been received.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the first and second audio decompression algorithms are to be implemented, at least in part, using a same software sequence, firmware, or hardware.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a software sequence, firmware, or hardware to enable the audio signal stored in the nonvolatile memory to be retrieved by calling the cell phone from a remote phone.
6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a software sequence, firmware, or hardware to authenticate the user to the cell phone before the audio signal stored in the nonvolatile memory is retrieved by the user.
7. The system of claim 1, further comprising a circuit to direct the audio signal of the incoming call to both an audio decompressor to decompress the audio signal and to the nonvolatile memory region to store the audio signal if the incoming call is not picked up and a screening function is active.
8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a circuit to direct the audio signal of the incoming call to the audio decompressor to decompress the audio signal, and not to the nonvolatile memory region to store the audio signal, if the incoming call is picked up.
9. The system of claim 1, further comprising a circuit to direct the audio signal of the incoming call to the nonvolatile memory region to store the audio signal, and not to the audio decompressor to decompress the audio signal, if the incoming call is not picked up and a screening function is inactive.

10. A method comprising:
- providing a cell phone with an integrated answering machine; and
 - enabling a user of the cell phone to screen an incoming call.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein enabling the user to screen an incoming call includes providing the cell phone with an option to activate or inactivate a screening function.
12. The method of claim 10, further comprising enabling the cell phone to record an audio signal of a second incoming call while a first incoming call is being received.
13. The method of claim 10, further comprising enabling the user to retrieve messages from the cell phone by calling the cell phone from a remote phone.
14. The method of claim 10, further comprising enabling the user to download messages from the cell phone to a computer system for storage, playback, or audio decompression.
15. A system comprising:
- a processor;
 - an antenna; and

a memory region including instructions that, if executed by the processor, cause the system to receive an incoming call via the antenna, answer the call with a prerecorded greeting, and store an audio signal of the incoming call in the memory region.

16. The system of claim 15, further comprising a speaker and instructions that, if executed by the processor, cause the system to screen the incoming call via the speaker.
17. The system of claim 16, further comprising instructions that, if executed by the processor, cause the system to screen the incoming call if it is determined that a screening function is active.
18. The system of claim 15, further comprising instructions that, if executed by the processor, cause the system to perform a message retrieval by sending the audio signal stored in the memory region via the antenna.